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TO: Rep. Mayes, Chairman; Rep. Horn, Vice-Chairman; and members of the House Energy and Technology Committee
FR: Wil Cwikiel
RE: Support for HB 6564
DT: November 29, 2010

I am writing to express my support for HB 6564 and SB 1591. This letter is written from the perspective of someone who cares deeply about the long-term ecological integrity of the Great Lakes as well as the long-term economic health of Michigan. I am also a Great Lakes shoreline property owner and served as the lone citizen representative on the Great Lakes Offshore Wind (GLOW) Council.

Seldom do we find the opportunity to unite the opportunity for economic development with the opportunity for long-term protection of our natural resources. By creating a permitting process in which Michigan's Great Lakes waters are protected while at the same time enabling offshore wind development, HB 6564 and SB 1591 represent this unique opportunity.

Offshore wind is a rapidly growing global industry. Federal policy supports and various studies project that substantial development will take place in the United States. Due to economies of scale, there will only be one or two regions in North America and several globally where the manufacturing will be done. Due to our manufacturing infrastructure, our advanced materials technology, our engineering capacity, and our fine universities, Michigan is ideally suited to be on the cutting edge of the offshore wind industry. Passage of HB 6564 will send a clear message to wind power developers that Michigan is THE place for wind technology, manufacturing, and development.

Currently, Michigan's state laws are inadequate to ensure a thorough, yet efficient, process to oversee the proper siting and development of an offshore wind project. HB 6546 and SB 1591 creates a process that will help guide the development of offshore wind projects in Michigan's Great Lakes waters from the initial site assessment throughout the life of the project, including site restoration and decommissioning of obsolete generators. This legislation includes a range of factors to be considered and prohibits projects from being built within six miles of the Michigan shoreline without the consent of the local community. The legislation also calls upon the DNRE to nominate Michigan's most favorable parcels for leasing within 180 days (sites identified by the GLOW Council). HB 6546 provides a statutory framework that both protects the Great Lakes and encourages offshore wind development in a thoughtful manner.

Michigan is defined by the Great Lakes—they are our essential natural feature. Critical threats to the long-term health of the Lakes, such as global climate change and atmospheric deposition of heavy metals and other persistent toxins, are directly related to the traditional forms of carbon-based power generation. A transition to non-carbon-based generation such wind power will be necessary for the future health of the Great Lakes. The legislation put forth in HB 6564 and SB 1591 represents a unique opportunity to promote long-term protection of the Great Lakes by enabling the development of a vital new chapter in Michigan's economic development—one in which our existing technology and manufacturing infrastructure is deployed to pave the way for Michigan to lead in the wind power industry.

HB 6564 is important to the future of Michigan's economic and environment health. I encourage you to pass this legislation out of committee so that your legislative colleagues can adopt this legislation during the current legislative session. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,

Wilfred Cwikiel, Citizen Member
Great Lakes Offshore Wind Council